

General study plan for Doctoral Study Programme in Geography with a focus on human geography at Stockholm University.

Note: This is a translation of the original document in Swedish (Dnr SU FV-2398-25): the Swedish language document takes legal precedence.

1. Decision

This general study plan for the Doctoral Programme in Geography with a focus on Human Geography is established by the Social Sciences Faculty Board at Stockholm University on 2007 -05-31, and revised on 2025-06-13.

The general study plan applies from and including 2025-06-13.

2. Subject description

Human geography studies human activities from a spatial perspective. This means that human geographers are interested in social processes including social planning and their spatial aspects, such as the spatial distribution, the context, the interaction between different places, the space as a physical place or as a social construction, created by social relations.

3. The aim of the education

Admission to the Doctoral Programme in Geography with a focus on Human Geography only takes place for studies that conclude with a doctoral degree. If there are special reasons, however, the social science faculty board can decide on admission for studies that end with a licentiate degree. Education at third-cycle in Geography with a focus on human geography can be completed with a licentiate or doctoral degree.

A doctoral student in Geography with a focus on human geography can take a licentiate degree as a stage in their education at research level. The licentiate stage is not mandatory for the human geography doctoral degree.

3.1 Doctoral degree

The doctoral degree is obtained after the doctoral student has completed an education of 240 higher education credits in a subject for education at postgraduate level.

Knowledge and understanding

For a doctoral degree, the doctoral student must

show broad knowledge within and a systematic understanding of the research area as well as deep and up-to-date specialist knowledge within a defined part of the research area, and

demonstrate familiarity with scientific methodology in general and with the specific research area's methods in particular.

Skills and Abilities

For a doctoral degree, the doctoral student must

show ability for scientific analysis and synthesis as well as for independent critical review and assessment of new and complex phenomena, issues and situations,

demonstrate the ability to critically, independently, creatively and with scientific accuracy identify and formulate questions as well as to plan and with adequate methods conduct research and other qualified tasks within given time frames and to review and evaluate such work,

demonstrate with a thesis their ability to significantly contribute to the development of knowledge through their own research,

demonstrate the ability to present and discuss research and research results with authority in both national and international contexts orally and in writing in dialogue with the scientific community and society in general,

demonstrate the ability to identify the need for additional knowledge, and

demonstrate the prerequisites for contributing to society's development and supporting the learning of others both within research and education as well as in other qualified professional contexts.

Evaluation of skills and abilities

For the doctoral degree, the doctoral student must



show intellectual independence and scientific honesty as well as the ability to make research ethical judgments, and

show in-depth insight into the possibilities and limitations of science, its role in society and people's responsibility for how it is used.

Scientific thesis (doctoral thesis)

For a doctoral degree, the doctoral student must have a scientific thesis (doctoral thesis) of 180 higher education credits approved.

Miscellaneous

For doctoral degrees with a certain focus, the specified requirements shall also apply, which each university itself determines within the framework of the requirements in this degree description.

3.2 Licentiate degree

The licentiate degree is achieved either after the research student has completed an education of at least 120 higher education credits in a subject for education at doctoral level, or after the research student has completed a part of at least 120 higher education credits of an education that is to be concluded with a doctoral degree, if the university decides that such a licentiate degree can be awarded at the university.

Knowledge and understanding

For the licentiate degree, the doctoral student must

demonstrate knowledge and understanding within the research area, including current specialist knowledge within a defined part of it as well as in-depth knowledge of scientific methodology in general and the specific research area's methods in particular.

Skills and Abilities

For the licentiate degree, the student must

demonstrate the ability to critically, independently and creatively and with scientific accuracy identify and formulate questions, to plan and with adequate methods carry out limited research work and other qualified tasks within given time frames and thereby contribute to the development of knowledge and to evaluate this work,

demonstrate the ability to clearly present and discuss research and research results in both national and international contexts orally and in writing in dialogue with the scientific community and society in general, and

demonstrate such skills as are required to participate independently in research and development work and to work independently in other qualified activities.

evaluation ability and approach

For the licentiate degree, the student must

demonstrate the ability to make research ethical judgments in their own research,

show insight into the possibilities and limitations of science, its role in society and people's responsibility for how it is used, and

demonstrate the ability to identify their need for additional knowledge and to take responsibility for their knowledge development.

Scientific thesis

For the licentiate degree, the student must have a scientific thesis of 75 higher education credits approved.

4. Eligibility and prerequisites

4.1 Basic eligibility

Those who have basic eligibility for education at postgraduate level

1. completed an advanced level degree,
2. completed course requirements of at least 240 higher education credits, of which at least 60 higher education credits at advanced level, or
3. in some other way within or outside the country acquired essentially equivalent knowledge.

The university may, for an individual applicant, grant exemptions from the requirement for basic eligibility, if there are special reasons. The institution's board decides on exemptions from requirements for basic eligibility.

4.2 Special eligibility requirements

Instruction language and seminar language are either Swedish or English. For special competence is required therefore very good knowledge of Swedish or English. It is also required that you have passed at least 90 higher education credits in human geography or have other relevant background for the education.

Any corresponding assessment of eligibility is made by the director of studies, and decisions are made by the Institutional Board.

5. Announcement and admission procedure

Admission decisions to Doctoral Programme in Geography with a focus on Human Geography are made by the departmental board at the department of human geography. The institutional board may not further delegate decisions on admission. The institutional board may only accept applicants who are employed as doctoral students for research-level education. Research-level education is provided to the extent that available resources allow. Information on admission to doctoral programme is routinely advertised on the institution's website. The announcement should also take place via SU's website. The announcement should be made at least one month before the application deadline

Decision on admission to the Doctoral Programme in Geography with a focus on Human Geography with other funding than doctoral employment is decided by the faculty committee.

For further information on how the exemptions according to ch. 7 Section 37 of the Higher Education Ordinance apply is referred to the Faculty of Social Sciences' guidelines for research-level education.

A doctoral student who has previously been admitted to graduate-level education with a licentiate degree as the final goal, and after completing the licentiate degree wishes continue the studies in to a doctoral degree in the same subject must apply to be accepted at the regular announcement. Admission is, where applicable, only for studies during the time remaining until the doctoral degree.

Admission to the Doctoral Programme in Geography with a focus on Human Geography can take place twice a year. Decisions on admission are made by the institution's board. The application deadlines are 1 April and 15 November each year, provided that vacancies are announced. At the time of admission in the spring, admission takes place to the places in the doctoral program financed by the department. Admission of externally funded doctoral

students can also take place at this time. At the time of admission in the autumn, only externally funded doctoral students are admitted. Decision on admission of doctoral students with funding other than doctoral position is taken by the Faculty. At the time of admission in the spring, a decision on admission is announced no later than in the first half of May of the same year, and studies at research level begin in the autumn semester. At the time of admission in the fall, a decision on admission is announced no later than mid-December, and studies at research level begin in the spring semester.

The application is made via the university's recruitment system and can be accessed at www.su.se. The application must be designed according to the instructions in the recruitment system and contain information about the highest degree, other degrees, current employment, language skills, references, and other information that is requested. Anyone applying for the Doctoral Programme in Geography with a focus on Human Geography must include the following (in Swedish or English):

1. Certified copies of grades and all cited credit documents, including essays, articles, reports and other scholarly works.
2. An outline that explains the planned research/research focus. It must indicate the main orientation, imaginable thesis topic, and ideally also a specification of possible research problem, theory, method and material. This outline is not binding but can be revised during the research process.
3. Names and contact details of two academic references.

5.1 Basis of assessment and selection criteria

An admissions committee appointed by the department board at the Department of Human Geography usually prepares the applications and makes selections. Ranking of applicants who meet the requirements for basic and special competence is made with regard to their ability to absorb the education. The assessment criteria applied to the selection are as follows:

1. The scientific ability demonstrated by the applicant in thesis work from advanced and undergraduate levels, as well as in the preliminary research plan.
 - a. independence in analysis and layout in previous works
 - b. problem formulation and rigor in previous work and research plan
 - c. previously demonstrated ability to meet given time frames
 - d. methodological and scientific maturity
 - e. communication and collaboration skills
2. The applicant's academic background in relevant areas of knowledge.



3. The applicant's ability to contribute to and benefit from the research environment at the department of human geography

The departmental board at the Department of Human Geography decides on admission to the Doctoral Programme in Geography with a focus on Human Geography.

Neither the decision to admit someone to the Doctoral Programme in Geography with a focus on Human Geography nor to hire someone who is a doctoral student can be appealed.

More detailed information about the admission process is described on the institution's website.

6. The content and organization of the training

The Doctoral Programme in Geography with a focus on Human Geography consists partly of courses of 60 ECTS credits, and partly of a thesis of 180 ECTS credits. 30 higher education credits correspond to one semester of full-time studies.

The education is planned so that the studies require four academic years for doctoral students who devote themselves full -time to their own education at postgraduate level. Thereby it is assumed that the doctoral student partly devotes himself completely to the studies, and partly makes effective use of the teaching and supervision. If a PhD student requests it, the employment refers to part -time work, but at least 50 percent of full-time, i.e. eight years.

The duration of study to obtain a doctoral degree is four years of full-time studies and the scope is 240 higher education credits. The education consists of a course part of 60 higher education credits and a dissertation part comprising 180 higher education credits. It is possible to take a licentiate degree after 120 credits, of which 45 credits must be made up of courses and 75 credits of scientific work.

All doctoral students who are admitted to study in Doctoral Programme in Geography with a focus on Human Geography must follow the present general curriculum. Any collaborations in the form of cotutelle, individual doctoral student participation in research school or externally funded projects can only affect the individual differences in the education that are documented in the individual study plan.

Details in the organization of the studies is determined under point 6.3 and in the individual study plan.

6.1 Individual study plan

Individual study plans must be drawn up for all active students in Doctoral Programme in Geography with a focus on Human Geography. The individual study plan contains the commitments of the university and the doctoral student, a financing plan and a timetable for the doctoral student's education. The plan is determined by the department board after consultation with the doctoral student and his or her supervisor.

The individual study plan is followed up at least once a year after consultation with the doctoral student and his or her supervisor and is changed by the university to the extent necessary.

For details regarding the establishment, management and follow-up of the individual study plans, refer to chapter 6 §§ 29 and 30 of the Higher Education Ordinance, Regulations for postgraduate education at Stockholm University as well as the Humanities area's instructions and the Faculty of Social Sciences' guidelines.

6.2 Supervision and other resources

Two supervisors must be appointed for each doctoral student. One of them must be appointed as the main supervisor. At least one supervisor must have undergone research supervisor training or by the faculty committee deemed to have corresponding competence. All supervisors must hold a doctorate or equivalent, and at least one supervisor must have decent qualifications. The person appointed as main supervisor must be employed at the department or, if the department decides so, at another department or institute within the faculty. However, at least one supervisor must be employed at the institution. A doctoral student who requests it may change supervisors. Decisions about supervisors can also be changed at the request of supervisors or for other reasons. The request for a change of supervisor must be sent to the director of studies and the supervisor is appointed by the head of department.

The supervision group/supervisor must give the student advice and instructions on how special courses should be selected and how the thesis work should be oriented, planned and carried out. Students must, through regular contacts, keep the supervisor informed about the progress of the work and obtain advice about the further arrangement.

In addition to supervision, the institution must provide a workplace and the working conditions required for the education. The student also has right to study and vocational guidance during the education period. The main responsibility for the latter lies with the supervisors.

The student has the right to supervision during the education as long as the rector does not with the support of ch. 6. Section 30 of the Higher Education Ordinance decides otherwise. In the case of a doctoral student who disregards their commitments according to the individual study plan, the vice-chancellor shall decide that the doctoral student shall no longer have the right to supervision and other resources for the education. Before such a decision is made, the doctoral student and his or her supervisor must be given the opportunity to express themselves. The test must be done on the basis of their accounts and other available investigations. In the assessment, consideration must be given to whether the university has fulfilled its own commitments according to the individual study plan. The decision must be in writing and justified. A decision on withdrawal of resources according to ch. 6 Section 30 of the Higher Education Ordinance can be appealed to the Appeals Board for the college.

For further information regarding tutorials and other resources, refer to regulations for research - level education at Stockholm University as well as instructions for individual study plans in the Humanities area.

6.3 Courses and examination

For a doctoral degree, courses of 60 higher education credits are required at research level or advanced level. Of the course credits, at least 15 university credits should consist of courses from the National Program for Doctoral Courses in Human Geography, and at least 15 higher education credits of method-oriented courses. For a doctoral degree in Geography with a focus on human geography, courses in human geography, or equivalent, of at least 37.5 higher education credits at research level or advanced level are required. Individually designed literature courses can comprise a maximum of 7.5 higher education credits. A course in higher education pedagogy can comprise a maximum of 7.5 higher education credits. Even courses organized by another department or outside the university can, depending on the supervisor or subject representative, be credited.

For the licentiate degree, courses of 30 higher education credits are required at research level or advanced level.

In connection with each course, individual tests are organized and the form of examination is shown in the individual study plans. These are usually written, but in exceptional cases can also be oral. Courses are assessed with the grade Pass or Fail.

6.3.1 Credit

The student's choice of courses should be approved by the director of studies for postgraduate education, who also assesses the point value of external courses in the human geography education.

Course credits from advanced level or equivalent can be credited in the education provided that the points have not been used to fulfill general eligibility requirements. Crediting affects the duration of study, for example the funded time of the education is shortened by one week per 1.5 credits credited. The application for credit must be in writing and include relevant course plans, course information and course certificates. The application is sent to the director of studies for postgraduate education.

6.3.2 Other mandatory elements

The doctoral program includes additional mandatory elements that do not generate higher education credits:

1. A thesis plan seminar: At the end of the first academic year, a thesis plan is presented by the doctoral student.
2. A half-term seminar: When approximately half of the thesis work is completed, a text containing drafts of parts of the thesis is presented.
3. A final seminar: At the final seminar, in principle, the entire manuscript for the thesis is presented.

6.4 Doctoral thesis and defense

For the Doctoral Programme in Geography with a focus on Human Geography, an approved thesis consisting of an independent work in human geography that corresponds to 180 university credits is required. The work is planned in consultation with supervisors.

A doctoral thesis in Geography with a human geography focus can consist of either a monograph or a number of compiled articles (a summary thesis). Requirements for the quality and scope of the research effort do not differ between the two forms. A summary thesis must contain an introductory chapter and a number of articles, each of which must have a quality and scope corresponding to an article that could be approved in a referee assessment for an international scientific journal. In cases other than the doctoral student contributed to one or more articles, the doctoral student's contribution must be clearly stated. Depending on the number of co-authored articles, a summary thesis usually consists of three to five articles.

If it is not clearly stated in one or more of the other parts of the thesis, the title of a summary thesis or the introductory chapter of a monograph must:

- Systematically place the thesis in a broader human-geographical context, as well as the research field the thesis contributes to.
- Identify the thesis' contribution to the development of knowledge in the research field, as well as what needs for additional knowledge exist within this.
- Relate the dissertation's method(s) to scientific methodology in general and commonly used methods in the research field.
- Do research ethics assessments relevant to the thesis.

The doctoral thesis can be written in English or Swedish, and theses written in Swedish must have a summary in English and vice versa.

The doctoral thesis must be defended orally at a public defense under the auspices of the university that may be held in Swedish or English. It is assessed with one of the grades pass or fail. When grading, consideration must be given to the content of the thesis and to the defense of it.

The opponent and assessment committee are appointed by the faculty committee on the basis of a proposal from the professor most closely concerned in consultation with the head of department and the supervisors. The opponent should have decent competence. If special reason exists, however, a person without decent qualifications can be appointed. The opponent must be independent of the doctoral student and the thesis. The composition of the grading committee and other aspects of the defense follow established guidelines regarding public defenses at the Faculty of Social Sciences at Stockholm University.

All course credits must be completed before the defense takes place.

6.5 Licentiate thesis and licentiate seminar

For Licentiate degree required approved licentiate thesis that corresponds to 75 university credits, which can consist of one or more articles with the same quality requirements as above.

The licentiate thesis must, at a seminar that takes place during the term, be reviewed by an opponent with at least a doctoral qualification and who has good knowledge of the essay's essential subject areas and methods. The essay must have been available at the department and the university library at least three weeks before the seminar takes place.



Opponent and examiner or possible grading committee are appointed by the departmental board/prefect on the proposal of the nearest affected subject representative. Supervisors may not participate in the grading of the essay. Licentiate thesis is assessed with one of the grades fail or pass. When grading, consideration must be given to the content of the essay and to the defense of it.

Provisions concerning the grading committee, etc. are found in guidelines issued by the Swedish Society for the Sciences the faculty committee at Stockholm University.

All course credits must be completed before the defense takes place.

7. Transitional rules

Students who have been accepted to Doctoral Programme in Geography with a focus on Human Geography before the general study plan came into force, may, after consultation with the main supervisor and director of studies, request to be transferred to this study plan. The request must be made to the director of studies for the doctoral program. The individual study plan must then be updated.

8. Miscellaneous

We refer students in the Doctoral Programme in Geography with a focus on Human Geography to current legislation, guidelines at Stockholm University and at the Faculty of Social Sciences and local application regulations.